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Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

18 April 1985

The April 1985 Central Committee Plenum

Summary

Soviet officials report that the CPSU Central Committee will meet this month for the first time since Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary. The plenum apparently will center on economic issues and could serve as the venue for a major address by Gorbachev on the subject. Some reporting suggests that the plenum will also set the date for the next party congress and perhaps release the draft of a revised Party Program. An emphasis on cadre issues at recent party meetings, together with a spate of personnel changes at the regional level, have heightened anticipation that personnel matters will figure prominently at the meeting. [redacted]

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The plenum agenda apparently has been revised in recent months to reflect changing political circumstances. Late last year both Chernenko and Gorbachev had indicated that the next plenum would focus on the need to accelerate the introduction of new technology into Soviet industry. Several organizations, including the State Committee for Science and Technology, were busy preparing for just such a plenum as recently as last January. [redacted]

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As Chernenko's health deteriorated, however, there were reports that discussion of this issue had been postponed in order to conserve his energies for more essential political matters. More recently Vadim Zagladin, first deputy chief of the Central

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Committee's International Department, told French officials that it definitely would not be on the agenda of this month's plenum, which he said would focus on other economic issues. If Zagladin is correct, the shift in agenda may reflect Gorbachev's different economic priorities. In a speech delivered last week, he drew a distinction between economic problems demanding immediate attention, such as fulfilling the annual plan, and those that require more study, such as improving economic planning and management. [redacted]

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[redacted] the plenum also will set the date for the 27th Party Congress and make a number of personnel changes. A revised Party Program (the party's formal set of guiding principles, last issued in 1961) also is expected to be released in draft form for public discussion prior to its approval by the congress. [redacted]

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[redacted] the date for the congress would not be set until June. If so, this would lend credence to reports that the congress, which Soviet officials previously had said would be held late this year, has been postponed until early 1986--a move that would give Gorbachev more time to position his supporters for election to the Central Committee. [redacted]

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Both the plenum and the upcoming party congress will give Gorbachev early opportunities to consolidate his position and establish his own leadership team. He already is beginning to shake up the bureaucracy and alter the composition of the Central Committee that will be confirmed at the congress. (He presumably got a head start on influencing the shape of the Central Committee during his years as cadres secretary under Andropov and Chernenko.) A better gauge of Gorbachev's political progress, however, will be the personnel changes that are made at this month's plenum. [redacted]

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[redacted] a range of possible personnel moves at the plenum that would have differing implications for Gorbachev. (An imaginary dialogue at Annex has been crafted to convey a sense of how party insiders might perceive this issue and to suggest the sense of political intrigue that surrounds such events.) One possibility--and one that we find most likely--is that Gorbachev clients, such as party secretaries Yegor Ligachev and Nikolay Ryzhkov, will be promoted to candidate members of the Politburo. At a recent Kremlin ceremony, Ligachev and Ryzhkov were seated in front of other secretaries who outranked them in terms of tenure. Gorbachev's former responsibilities as agriculture secretary could be assumed by Ligachev, who recently has attended a series of meetings on agriculture, or by a new secretary, promoted from one of the more agriculturally important regions. Two regional party leaders often mentioned as likely candidates for the post are Vsevolod Murakhovskiy, who succeeded Gorbachev in Stavropol' Kray, and Georgiy Razumovskiy, the party chief in Krasnodar Kray who once

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worked with Gorbachev during a stint on the Agro-Industrial Commission. [redacted]

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In addition, one or two other leaders may become "senior secretaries" (secretaries who simultaneously hold full membership in the Politburo). Gorbachev's strongest supporters are mostly junior leaders, making it unlikely that one of them would move up this rapidly. (The exception, Russian Republic Premier Vitaliy Vorotnikov, appears a more likely candidate to succeed Premier Tikhonov, a change that would not be made until the Supreme Soviet convenes later this year.) If Gorbachev should succeed in promoting one of these junior supporters to senior secretary status, it would be a demonstration of extraordinary political strength. [redacted]

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[redacted] a more likely choice for a senior secretary slot, however, would be candidate Politburo member Vladimir Dolgikh. Dolgikh (60) has been responsible for overseeing civilian heavy industry since he became a party secretary in 1972. Although not a Gorbachev client, his promotion would, nonetheless, serve Gorbachev's interest by creating a counterweight to Romanov, potentially the new General Secretary's most formidable opponent among the younger leaders. [redacted]

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We believe some modest advances by Gorbachev supporters are the most likely outcome, but we cannot rule out the possibility of a political backlash. Gorbachev's emphasis on cadre accountability, outspoken criticism last week of Premier Tikhonov's ministries, and a recent string of personnel changes could convince remaining members of the Politburo's "Old Guard" (those who prospered under Brezhnev and Chernenko) that they must check Gorbachev to protect their own positions. The promotion of Moscow party chief Viktor Grishin or other Old Guard figures in addition to Gorbachev's supporters would indicate that Gorbachev had to reach an accommodation before the plenum. (Grishin, however, would not be likely to pose a serious threat to Gorbachev, who could even use him to isolate Romanov.) A failure to make any personnel changes at all, on the other hand, would suggest that the leadership was deadlocked--a prospect we find the least likely, given the Old Guard's reduced numbers and Gorbachev's reputed mastery of consensus politics. [redacted]

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ANNEX: AN INSIDER'S VIEW OF THE APRIL PLENUM

The following imaginary dialogue between two well-placed party aides is intended to suggest how the plenum may be perceived by party insiders and how its outcome could affect their own assessments of Gorbachev's political progress. The dialogue is presented in the form of a [redacted] conversation between Vitaliy Vrublevskiy, an aide to Ukrainian party chief and CPSU Politburo member Vladimir Shcherbitskiy, and Ivan Dmitriyevich (last name unknown), an assistant to Mikhail Solomentsev, the Politburo member who chairs the Party Control Committee.

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VRUBLEVSKIY: Hello,

IVAN DMITRIYEVICH: Vitaliy Konstantinovich?

VRUB: Yes.

I.D.: This is Ivan Dmitriyevich. Good morning.

VRUB: Greetings, Ivan Dmitriyevich.

I.D.: I haven't talked to you since your return from the United States. How was your trip?

VRUB: Interesting, but of course shorter than we planned. (Comment: Vrublevskiy was a member of Shcherbitskiy's parliamentary delegation that was forced to shorten its visit to the United States in March when Chernenko died.)

I.D.: I read the report by Vladimir Vladimirovich (Shcherbitskiy) that was circulated in the Politburo. I assume you had a hand in that?

VRUB: Yes.

I.D.: Well done! Listen, Vitaliy Konstantinovich, I'm calling about the rumors of personnel changes at this month's plenum.

VRUB: Will there be many? You know, Ivan Dmitriyevich, Kiev has its disadvantages. We often have to rely on you and a few other comrades in Moscow to keep us abreast of such things.

I.D.: Just remember what they say, Vitaliy Konstantinovich: The happy man is one who knows nothing. In truth, I don't know many details either, but it must be obvious to you that several posts need to be filled--they need a new agriculture secretary, for example.

VRUB: Who will it be?

I.D.: I believe this is still being discussed. My friend, Yevgeniy Zotovich (Razumov, first deputy chief of the Central Committee's Organizational Party Work Department) told me that some of the new one's (Gorbachev's) proteges are in line for it. He said that comrade Ligachev (the party secretary who heads the department) recently asked him to send Murakhovskiy's file to Gorbachev.

VRUB: Murakhovskiy?

I.D.: You know, the first secretary from Stavropol' Kray.

VRUB: Stavropol'? You mean, Gorbachev's...

I.D.: Precisely. (Comment: Gorbachev was party first secretary in Stavropol' Kray from 1970 until 1978, when he became agriculture secretary, and undoubtedly had a say in the selection of his successor.) Yevgeniy Zotovich (Razumov) told me that he thinks Ligachev himself may also be under consideration. Have you noticed the agricultural meetings he has attended lately--the conference in Leningrad earlier this year and then the agricultural academy meeting last month?

VRUB: But I heard that Ligachev also is close to Gorbachev.

I.D.: That's right. They say that Mikhail Sergeyevich (Gorbachev) may also have been instrumental in Ligachev's advancement. Well, you know how it is. Even if Ligachev keeps his current duties (he oversees personnel matters) he probably will become a candidate member (of the Politburo) also.

VRUB: Yes. Then it's between those two--Murakhovskiy and Ligachev?

I.D.: Not necessarily. I don't think Mikhail Sergeyevich is enthusiastic.

VRUB. You mean Solomentsev?

I.D.: That's right. And there are others, like Nikolay Aleksandrovich (presumably Premier Tikhonov), who undoubtedly would prefer someone else. I've even heard the name of Vladimir Vladimirovich (Shcherbitskiy) mentioned in that connection. (Comment: Tikhonov is a member of the Politburo's "Old Guard" that reportedly backed Chernenko, rather than Gorbachev, as Andropov's

successor. Shcherbitskiy's record of support for both Andropov and Chernenko might make him acceptable to both the Old Guard and Gorbachev's supporters.)

VRUB: I'm not surprised, but, of course, Vladimir Vladimirovich tells me very little. Nikolay Aleksandrovich (presumably Tikhonov) has been calling more often than usual. You say other changes might also be made?

I.D.: Well, yes. You know, some of Gorbachev's people are said to be concerned about the Leningrader (senior party secretary Grigoriy Romanov, former Leningrad oblast party chief). I think there is some uneasiness with the fact that he is, you know, the only other senior secretary.

VRUB: But surely they can't be worried about him. Does anyone really take him seriously? After all, he has this reputation...

I.D.: I know, I know. But he's a powerful man. You know, he's in charge of defense industry, machine building, security organs... I think the new people would like to have another senior secretary around to keep him in check...to play one off against the other, so to speak.

VRUB: To divide and conquer, as they say. But who would this be?

I.D.: The name I've heard most often is Dolgikh (Vladimir Dolgikh, a party secretary and candidate member of the Politburo, whose promotion to full membership would make him a senior secretary).

VRUB: But he's not one of Gorbachev's men.

I.D.: No, but he probably would serve their purpose. When you speak of the new one's men, I assume you have in mind people like Ligachev, Ryzhkov (party secretary Vladimir Ryzhkov), Vorotnikov (Vitaliy Vorotnikov, a full member of the Politburo and chairman of the Russian Republic's Council of Ministers), and, I suppose, Chebrikov (Viktor Chebrikov, the chairman of the KGB and a candidate member of the Politburo). (Comment: All of those described here as the "new one's men" were promoted during the tenure of Gorbachev's patron, Andropov, at a time when Gorbachev was responsible for supervising cadre appointments. Solomentsev also was promoted during this period, but probably was "kicked upstairs" to make room for Vorotnikov, who assumed Solomentsev's Russian Republic post.)

VRUB: So what do you predict?

I.D.: Based on what my contacts tell me, I think Dolgikh probably will be promoted to full member and Ligachev and possibly even Ryzhkov to candidate members.

VRUB: But, all things considered, wouldn't this benefit the new one and allow him to move more quickly on personnel matters? You know, some concern is being expressed here that things already are moving too fast. Some people are really anxious about their jobs. After all, you know, even Neporozhniy, was not immune this time. (Comment: Petr Neporozhniy, the Minister of Power and Electrification, retired last month. Although health was cited as the reason for his departure, his ministry was recently criticized and the Politburo failed to express its gratitude for his service, suggesting that he was removed for cause. Neporozhniy had weathered several storms over the years, and Vrublevskiy obviously was surprised that he wasn't able to survive this one. The fact that Neporozhniy is Ukrainian probably gave his removal special resonance among Vrublevskiy's associates in the Ukraine.)

I.O.: Yes, I know. There also is some uneasiness here in Moscow. They say Gorbachev's supporters favor some sort of economic reforms, and this, naturally, has caused some concern. When it comes to reform, most people here live by the adage that you must "measure seven times before cutting." How did your people react to Ligachev's instruction to place greater emphasis on cadre problems?

VRUB: Well, you can imagine, Ivan Dmitriyevich! This only increased the anxiety. You know, this issue was the subject of several recent plenums in the republics, including our own. It seems clear that Gorbachev is giving this a high priority...putting pressure on those who fail to measure up to standards. Then just last week Ligachev himself attended the plenum in Dnepropetrovsk that addressed this problem. Who knows where the ax will fall next?

I.D.: Yes, and it is precisely this kind of anxiety, Vitaliy Konstantinovich, that is leading some people to try to put the brakes on, so to speak, and that makes the outcome of the plenum more uncertain. I hear there is a move in some quarters, for example, to promote Viktor Viktorovich (Grishin) to the Secretariat to handle ideological matters. (Comment: Politburo member Grishin is a member of the Old Guard.)

VRUB: So Gorbachev may not do as well at the plenum as you predict?

I.D.: That's right. As I said, I think the results will generally be favorable from his standpoint, although a senior secretary slot probably will go to someone outside his camp, like Dolgikh. Gorbachev's people are generally too junior for such a post. Ligachev and Ryzhkov, for example, are not yet even candidate members of the Politburo. Only Vorotnikov would be eligible, and most of my contacts think he is more likely to replace Nikolay Aleksandrovich (Tikhonov) as Premier, which would not be done until the Supreme Soviet meets later this year.

VRUB: But, of course, if several of the older ones like Viktor Viktorovich (presumably Grishin) were to be promoted, this could make our so-called "new broom" less effective. (Comment: The term "new broom" is sometimes used to describe officials who undertake a "housecleaning" operation, usually through a crackdown on corruption. In this context, Vrublevskiy appears to be referring to Gorbachev.)

I.D.: Precisely. And if no changes are made at all, of course, this would also be a serious setback for him.

VRUB: Well, one can only hope that Vladimir Vladimirovich (Shcherbitskiy) will get some reward from all of this. Really, Ivan Dmitriyevich, his capabilities should not be underestimated, and I know he has been trying for a post in Moscow for some time. Frankly, I wouldn't mind the move myself, and it might improve Masha's state of mind. You know, she gave me such a shopping list when I left for the United States, and I had planned to buy some things in New York, but, of course, we never got there. I assume Anna Nikolayevna is well?

I.D.: Yes, thank you, Vitaliy Konstantinovich. I must hang up now. I'll call you if I learn anything more, and you must do the same.

VRUB: You can be sure of it. Good-bye, Ivan Dmitriyevich.

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Interlocking Directorate of the Soviet Leadership

Party				Government	
Politburo	Date of Birth	Election	Other Post	Secretariat	Council of Ministers Presidium of Supreme Soviet
Full Member				General Secretary	
Gorbachev	3/02/31	10/21/80			
Aliyev	5/10/23	11/22/82			1st Deputy Chairman
Griehin	9/18/14	4/08/71	Moscow party chief		Member
Gromyko	7/18/08	4/27/73			Minister of Foreign Affairs and 1st Deputy Chairman
Kunayev	1/12/12	4/08/71	Kazakhstan party chief		Member
Romanov	2/07/23	3/06/76		Defense Industry, Machine Building, Security Organs	
Stcherbitekiy	2/17/18	4/08/71	Ukraine party chief		Member
Solomentsev	11/07/13	12/26/83	Party Control Committee		
Tikhonov	5/14/05	11/27/79			Chairman
Vorotnikov	1/20/26	12/26/83	RSFSR Premier		
Candidate Member					
Chebrikov	4/23	12/26/83			KGB Chairman
Demichev	1/03/18	11/03/84			Minister of Culture
Dolgikh	12/25/24	5/24/82		Extractive Industries and Construction	
Kuznetsov	2/13/01	10/03/77			1st Deputy Chairman
Ponomarev	1/17/05	5/19/72		Nonruling Communist Parties	
Shevardnadze	1/25/28	11/27/78	Georgia party chief		
				Kapitonov—Light industry and consumer goods	
				Ligachev—Personnel	
				Rusakov—Ruling Communist parties	
				Ryzhkov—Economic management	
				Zimyanin—Propaganda, Ideology	

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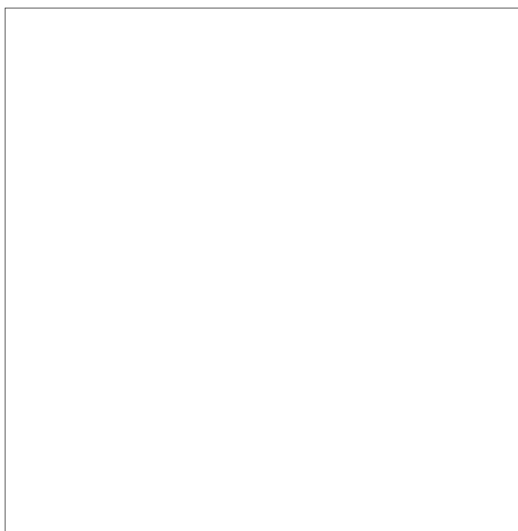
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